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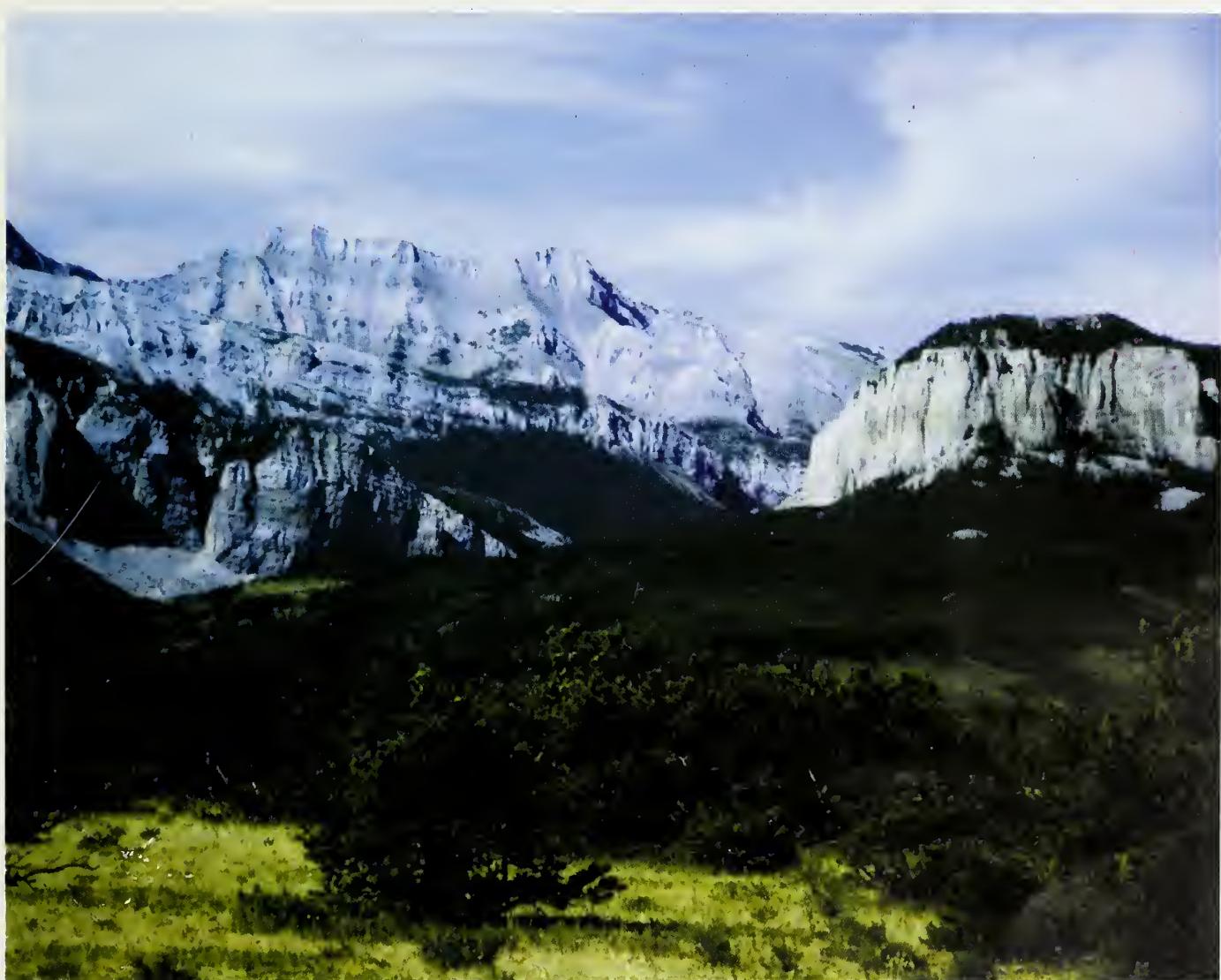
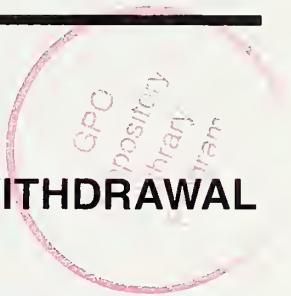
United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Northern Region

October 2000



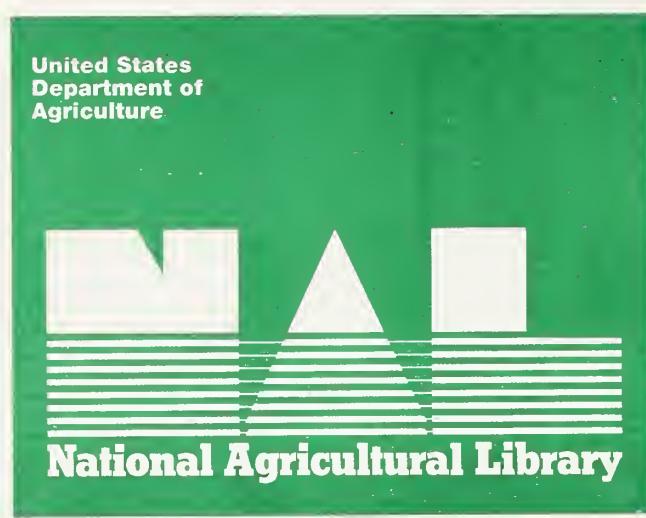
## RECORD OF DECISION

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT MINERAL WITHDRAWAL



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*Cover photo: Muddy Creek Drainage*

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT MINERAL WITHDRAWAL**

**HELENA AND LEWIS AND CLARK FOREST PLAN**

**AMENDMENTS**

Glacier, Lewis and Clark, Pondera and Teton Counties, Montana



*Michael Dombeck*

MICHAEL DOMBECK  
Chief USDA Forest Service

Date: *September 25, 2000*



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This record of decision documents my recommendation, and consent, to the Secretary of the Interior for a formal withdrawal of 405,000 acres of National Forest System lands, known as the Rocky Mountain Front, from future mineral exploration and development. I am amending the Helena and Lewis and Clark Forest Plans to reflect that these lands will not be available for the exploration and development of mineral resources under the General Mining Laws. The mineral withdrawal would be subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior after 20 years. This withdrawal is being recommended to limit mineral-related activities in order to protect other resources. The withdrawal does not apply to private property.

Last year, I announced my intent to pursue a mineral withdrawal for the Rocky Mountain Front. On February 3, 1999, notice of application for a withdrawal was published in the Federal Register, which resulted in a two-year segregation (moratorium) on the location of new mining claims. Since February, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have completed a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and have prepared the Mineral Withdrawal Report required by the Federal Land Management Policy Act.

Amendments to the Helena and Lewis & Clark Forest Plans reflect the mineral withdrawal decision. If the Secretary of the Interior does not approve the mineral withdrawal, the Plan amendments will not take effect.

## **II. DECISION**

Based on the analysis of effects contained in the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal FEIS, I have selected alternative B, consenting to the withdrawal of the Rocky Mountain Front from mineral entry under the General Mining Laws. Alternative B also amends the Helena Forest Plan, Appendix Q, "Withdrawals from Mineral Entry" and Forest-wide Management Standards; and the Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan, Table 2.2, "Projected Outputs, Activities and Costs," Forest-wide Management Standards, and Geographic Unit Descriptions for the Rocky Mountain Division. The final decision to withdraw the area lies with the Secretary of the Interior.

## **III. REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

### **RECOMMENDATION OF WITHDRAWAL TO DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR**

Based on the analysis in the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal FEIS, I have decided that a mineral withdrawal is warranted to protect the outstanding natural resources present in this area.

The FEIS describes the activities that could take place if the area was not withdrawn. The Forecast for Future Mineral Activity projected the likelihood of mining activities that could occur in the withdrawal area. The activities with the highest likelihood of occurrence within the withdrawal area are prospecting, claimstaking, geochemical and geophysical surveying and exploration drilling and trenching.

The withdrawal would forego opportunities for mineral resource development as described under Alternative A. These opportunities are detailed in Chapter 3 of the FEIS and include claim staking and exploration activities. I believe that the loss of the opportunities described in Alternative A are outweighed by the benefits of protecting and preserving the other resources found along the Rocky Mountain Front.

The public comments and the description of resources in the FEIS (Chapter 3, Affected Environment) point out that this particular area provides a unique combination of special places and outstanding resource

values important to citizens across the nation. The FEIS demonstrates that mineral activity could place at risk the scenic, social and wildlife resources found along the Rocky Mountain Front.

As pointed out in the FEIS, the setting is adjacent to the Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Great Bear Wildernesses, Glacier National Park and the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The area includes tributaries of the Blackfoot and Missouri Rivers. A segment of North Badger Creek is designated as scenic and a segment of the North Fork of Birch Creek is designated as wild.

The Heritage Resources section of the FEIS describes the rich cultural resources found throughout the withdrawal area. Based on surveys of the Lewis and Clark National Forest, the Rocky Mountain Ranger District portion of the withdrawal area has some of the highest densities of heritage sites on the forest. Pictograph and prehistoric artifact scatters are relatively common. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail passes through the Helena National Forest portion of the withdrawal area. Mineral exploration activities that involve ground disturbance may affect cultural sites. The risks of impacts to cultural resources in the withdrawal area range from moderate to low.

The Wildlife section in Chapter 3 illustrates the abundant wildlife along the Rocky Mountain Front. There has been relatively little human disturbance such as timber harvest, mining, oil and gas development and road construction in the area. The result is a large area of relatively undisturbed habitat that has allowed many species to thrive when they have disappeared from most of the rest of their range. The potential effects on species would vary depending on the location and type of activity. The mineral withdrawal would help protect grizzly bear and other wildlife habitat.

The Scenery section of the FEIS states that the area consists primarily of undeveloped, unroaded landscapes. The impacts of man's activities are typically minimal. The area depicts a natural appearing landscape; many would consider it to be of wilderness character with vast untouched areas of high scenic integrity and immense scale. This landscape is unique among lands administered by the Forest Service, with the exception of areas set aside as wilderness. Impacts to the scenic resources would range from unnoticeable ground disturbance to soil disturbance and equipment that could alter a view.

The area is noted for its spectacular beauty and outstanding dispersed recreation opportunities. The undeveloped recreation opportunities and the area's proximity to the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex and Glacier National Park draw visitors from across the state and the nation. The area's remoteness, wildness, scenic beauty and spiritual values have resulted in a very significant core of recreationists and other users with strong, emotional attachments to the area and its existing character. Exploration associated activities such as drilling, trenching or road building could displace recreationists or decrease the sense of remoteness in an area. The withdrawal would help maintain the existing recreation setting and opportunities.

Forest Service mining regulations at 36 CFR 228 Subpart A and various federal statutes such as the Clean Water Act, NEPA, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, etc., provide a means of minimizing the effects from mining operations on National Forest System lands. However, the Forest Service under its current authority cannot prohibit, or so unreasonably limit as to amount to a prohibition, activities that are reasonably necessary for a mining operation. If an operator can meet federal standards and the proposed activities are reasonably necessary to the exploration or mining operation, by law those activities would have to be allowed. While the Forest Service can reduce risk, the maximum protection for this exceptional land can best be achieved by withdrawing the area. I believe this is consistent with the various public land laws, and the withdrawal provision of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Rocky Mountain Front  
Mineral Withdrawal  
Lewis and Clark and Helena National Forests

Glacier  
Nat'l Park

Two Medicine River

89

Blackfeet  
Indian Reservation

44

89

44

Bob Marshall  
Wilderness Complex

Birch Creek  
Swift Reservoir

44

89

12

Proposed Mineral  
Withdrawal Area



4 0 4 8 12 Miles

44

89

12

Miles

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Miles

Vicinity Map

GREAT FALLS

Map 1



## FOREST PLAN AMENDMENTS

The decision to withdraw the Rocky Mountain Front requires amendment of the Helena and Lewis and Clark Forest Plans. In accordance with 16 USC 1604(f)(4), 36 CFR 219.10, FSM 1922.5 and FSH 1909.12 Section 5.32, I have determined that the amendments to the Helena and Lewis and Clark National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) do not constitute significant changes in the Plans. This determination is based on the following criteria:

a. Timing. The timing factor examines at what point, over the course of the Forest Plan period the plan is amended. According to FSH 1909.12 Section 5.32(3)(a) “in most cases, the later the change, the less likely it is to be significant for the current forest plan.” Appendix Q of the Helena Forest Plan and Table 2.2 of the Lewis and Clark Forest Plan are listings of National Forest System lands withdrawn from mineral entry. Amendments to these sections will update these lists to include the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal. The timing of this amendment is not significant in terms of the remaining effective period of the Forest Plans.

b. Location and Size. The relevant consideration here is “the relationship of the affected area to the overall planning area” (FSH 1909.12 Section 5.32(3)(b)). The amendments to Appendix Q of the Helena Forest Plan and Table 2.2 of the Lewis and Clark Forest Plan simply update the lists of National Forest System lands that have been withdrawn. The acreage withdrawn by this action on the Lewis and Clark National Forest is 21% percent of the total forest acreage. The portion of the Helena National Forest withdrawn by this action is 3% of total forest acreage.

c. Goals, Objectives and Outputs. The goals, objectives and outputs factor involves the determination of “whether the change alters the long-term relationship between the level of goods and services in the overall planning area” (FSH 1909.12 Section 5.32(3)(c)). This criterion concerns analysis of the overall Forest Plan and the various multiple-use resources that may be affected. The guidance in FSH 1909.12 Section 5.32(3)(c) explains, “in most cases, changes in outputs are not likely to be a significant change in the Forest Plan unless the change would forgo the opportunity to achieve an output in later years.”

Forest Plans and objectives for mineral management do not lead to targeted outputs, but they do permit mineral activities. The Forecast for Future Mineral Activity (Appendix C) details the probability of mineral activity in the withdrawal area. Exploration is expected to take place intermittently for the projected future. The forecast does not predict that mineral activity is likely to increase over historic levels, which have been minimal (2 activities in the past 30 years), and therefore this amendment will not result in a major change in the level of goods and services in the overall planning area.

d. Management Prescription. The management prescription factor involves the determination of (1) “whether the change in a management prescription is only for a specific situation or whether it would apply to future decisions throughout the planning area” and (2) “whether or not the change alters the desired future condition of the land and resources or the anticipated goods and services to be produced” FSH 1909.12 Section 5.32(3)(d). This decision does forgo possible future mineral development for the Rocky Mountain Front, but the effects of that are extremely low as described in Chapter 3 of the FEIS. The amendments to the Helena and Lewis and Clark Forest Plans are for the specific situation evaluated in the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal EIS and do not apply to future decisions throughout the planning area. This decision does not alter the desired future condition of the land and resources nor will it significantly alter the level of anticipated goods and resources to be produced.

## IV. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternatives considered in detail represent two different options for the management of hardrock mineral resources on Federal lands.

### **Alternative A: No Mineral Withdrawal**

This alternative is referred to as the "No Action" Alternative because no action would be taken to withdraw the area from mineral location and entry. It would continue the federal minerals management that existed before February 3, 1999, when the study area was closed to location of new mining claims for a two-year study period. Under this alternative, federal lands (approximately 405,000 acres) would remain available for mineral exploration and development under the General Mining Law of 1872. Mining claims could be staked for minerals considered "locatable" (e.g. gold, copper, silver, lead, zinc and platinum). These claims would give the claimant exclusive possessory rights to the federal mineral deposits subject to conditions under the General Mining Law of 1872 and other applicable statutes.

Exploration and mining on National Forest System lands would be subject to the surface management regulations found in 36 CFR 228 Subpart A and other applicable state and federal laws. All significant disturbances would require filing a plan of operations with the Forest Service and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Approval must be received before any significant surface disturbance takes place.

The Helena and Lewis and Clark National Forest Plans would not be amended.

### **Alternative B: Proposed Mineral Withdrawal**

Alternative B is the proposed mineral withdrawal. Under this alternative, no new claims for federal hardrock minerals could be located within the withdrawal area for twenty years. The withdrawal would be subject to review at the end of the twenty-year period.

Exploration and mining for locatable minerals would be prohibited on federal lands subject to valid existing rights. The proposed mineral withdrawal would not apply to private lands.

The Helena and Lewis and Clark National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans would be amended to be consistent with the mineral withdrawal.

### **Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

Alternative B, mineral withdrawal is the environmentally preferred alternative. This alternative best protects, preserves non-commodity resources.

### **Alternatives Eliminated From Detailed Study**

Some additional alternatives surfaced during the scoping process. The following alternatives were considered but not analyzed in detail:

- Extend the time period of the proposed withdrawal beyond 20 years.
- Extend the withdrawal area to the south of the proposed boundary.
- Eliminate the Helena National Forest portion of the withdrawal area.

These alternatives were not analyzed in detail because they were either beyond the scope of this analysis, inconsistent with existing laws and regulations or have effects similar to an alternative considered in detail. A more detailed discussion of why these alternatives were eliminated from detailed study is provided in the FEIS.

## **V. ISSUES AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **Public Comment**

Public involvement included publication of notices in the Federal Register, news releases to area newspapers, scoping letters, public meetings in area communities and briefings to interested parties, local, state and federal officials. Public involvement is summarized in Chapter 4, Consultation and Coordination, and in Appendix J of the FEIS.

### **Issues**

The setting in which the proposed mineral withdrawal occurs contributes to the breadth and intensity of public opinion about the future minerals management in this area. Comments received during scoping addressed what the public perceives as nationally and internationally recognized resources in and around the area.

Numerous comments addressed the unique scenic, roadless, wildlife and recreation resources found along the Rocky Mountain Front. There was concern expressed about potential impacts of mining on these resources.

Other commenters questioned the need for the withdrawal in light of the low potential for mining-related activities along the Rocky Mountain Front. They questioned the expense of the analysis. The economic impacts to the local economies resulting from the withdrawal of the mineral resources were also questioned.

The following issues were identified through scoping meetings and from a content analysis of approximately 300 comments received from individuals, organizations and agencies during the scoping period:

- 1. How does the proposed mineral withdrawal affect the availability of minerals in the study area?**
- 2. What are the economic implications of the proposed mineral withdrawal?**

Other issues that deal with resource values found in the study area include:

- 3. What is the potential for the proposed mineral withdrawal to protect heritage resources in the study area?**
- 4. What is the potential for the proposed mineral withdrawal to protect scenery and recreation values in the study area?**
- 5. What is the potential for the proposed mineral withdrawal to protect wildlife resources in the study area, including threatened, endangered and sensitive species and their habitat?**
- 6. What is the potential for the proposed mineral withdrawal to protect the water resources in the study area?**

## VI. FINDINGS

### Compliance with Current Laws and Regulations

**Endangered Species Act:** A biological assessment was completed for the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal (Appendix F). The determination for the endangered gray wolf, the threatened grizzly bear, the threatened bald eagle, the threatened bull trout and the threatened Canada lynx is no effect. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was not required to concur with the determination that the mineral withdrawal will not affect these species.

**Federal Land Policy and Management Act:** Mineral withdrawals are authorized under Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, with implementing regulations at 43 CFR 2310. The Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal and the associated FEIS are in conformance with this law and regulation.

### Consistency with Forest Plans

The National Forest Management Act requires a determination of whether a proposed amendment would result in a significant change in the Forest Plan (36 CFR 219.10(f)). Amendments to the Helena and Lewis and Clark Forest Plans are not considered significant, as discussed previously. Appendix Q, "Withdrawals from Mineral Entry", of the Helena National Forest Plan and Table 2.2, "Projected Outputs, Activities and Costs", of the Lewis and Clark National Forest Plan would be amended to reflect the mineral withdrawal.

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS

**Recommendation of Withdrawal:** Following the final disposition of agency appeal processes, if the action is upheld, the agency will provide an official, written recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw the Rocky Mountain Front from the General Mining Laws, as amended.

**Forest Plan Amendments:** Amendments to the Helena and Lewis and Clark Forest Plans are effective on the date the Public Land Order, signed by the Secretary of the Interior, is published in the Federal Register.

## VIII. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Chapter 4 of the FEIS summarizes consultation and coordination that has occurred throughout the analysis. Consultation with other agencies and public involvement has been an important part of this withdrawal process. During the entire NEPA process, more than 1500 responses were received from individuals, businesses, counties, groups, elected officials and agencies. Formal public involvement activities included four public open houses, numerous briefings for state, county and other federal agencies and many personal contacts.

Federal agencies that commented or were consulted include the Environmental Protection Agency, Glacier National Park, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and the US Geologic Survey. State of Montana Agencies that commented or that were consulted include the Office of the Governor, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and State Historic Preservation Office. County Commissioners from Glacier, Lewis and Clark, Pondera and Teton Counties were consulted. Offices in the Blackfeet Tribal Government were also contacted. The letters associated with this consultation are displayed in Chapter IV of the FEIS.

## **IX. PLANNING RECORDS**

The planning records contain detailed information and data used in preparation of the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal FEIS and in my selection of alternative B for implementation. Documents are available at:

Lewis and Clark National Forest  
1101 15<sup>th</sup> Street North  
P.O. Box 869  
Great Falls, MT 59403-0869

For additional information contact: David Whittekiend, ID Team Leader at the above address, (406) 791-7700.

## **X. APPEAL RIGHTS**

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations 36 CFR 217. A written notice of appeal must be postmarked or received within 45 days after the date of the notice of this decision is published in the Federal Register. The responsible official is Mike Dombeck, Chief, USDA Forest Service, Sidney R. Yates Federal Building, 201 14<sup>th</sup> Street, SW at Independence Ave., SW, P.O. Box 96090, Washington DC 20090-6090.

Appeals must meet content requirements of 36 CFR 217.9. Any notice of appeal must include, at a minimum:

1. State that the document is a Notice of Appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR part 217;
2. List the name, address, and telephone number of the appellant;
3. Identify the decision about which the requester objects;
4. Identify the document in which the decision is contained by title and subject, date of the decision, and name and title of the Responsible Official;
5. Identify specifically that portion of the decision or decision document to which the requester objects;
6. State the reasons for objecting, including issues of fact, law, regulation, or policy, and, if applicable, specifically how the decision violates law, regulation, or policy; and,
7. Identify the specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks.

Notice of Appeal should be mailed to:

USDA  
Attn: Under Secretary James R. Lyons  
Appeals Deciding Officer  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington DC 20250

## **XI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For additional information concerning this decision or for copies of the Proposed Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal FEIS or Record of Decision, contact Lewis and Clark National Forest, Attn: Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal, P.O. Box 869, Great Falls, Montana 59403-0869 or call David Whittekiend (EIS Team Leader) at (406) 791-7700.



**FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 22**

**LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL FOREST**

**OCTOBER 2000**



## BACKGROUND

The Lewis and Clark National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) was approved by the Regional Forester on June 4, 1986. The Forest Plan guides all natural resource management activities and established management standards for the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

Under the general mining laws, all National Forest System lands on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District were available for the staking of mining claims for locatable minerals except those already specifically withdrawn from entry, which includes existing wilderness. National Forest System Lands can only be withdrawn to mineral entry by a specific act of Congress or through the withdrawal process under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The Record of Decision for the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal selecting Alternative B of the Final Environmental Impact Statement specifically reflects the Chief of the Forest Service's decision to consent to withdrawal of all the acres open to the staking of claims under the general mining laws on the Rocky Mountain Ranger District. These areas would be closed to the staking of mining claims for locatable minerals for the next 20 years. This withdrawal would be subject to review by the Forest Service and by the Department of Interior toward the end of the withdrawal period. The withdrawal may be extended upon compliance with the provisions of FLPMA, and if the purpose for which the withdrawal was first made requires the extension. Any extension shall only be for a period no longer than the length of the original withdrawal period. The Secretary of Interior shall report on such review and extensions to the Congress.

This document reflects the actual language changes made to the Lewis and Clark Forest Plan by way of amendment by the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral withdrawal decision.

## FOREST PLAN MANAGEMENT DIRECTION (Changes shown in bold)

Forest Plan direction for mineral resources is found in variety of locations in the Forest Plan. Table 2.2 contained projected outputs, activities and costs. Direction for locatable minerals management is provided under Forest-wide management standards and under specific direction for management areas. Descriptions of the Geographic Units in the Forest Plan provide an overview of the resources in the area, past activities and possible future management actions. The descriptions of the Geographic Units do not have any language specific to locatable hardrock minerals.

### Projected Outputs and Activities

Projected outputs and activities were used to estimate needs for programming and budgeting on the Forest. Table 2.2 Projected Outputs, Activities, and Costs (Forest Plan page 2-13) contains an entry under Minerals-nonenergy that displays the acres on the Forest, and their status. Table 2.2 is changed as shown below to reflect that all acreage on the Rocky Mountain Division has been withdrawn from mineral entry as a result of the decisions made from the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal Final EIS.

Table 2.2

RESOURCE USE AND DEVELOPMENT FACTORS	UNITS	Rockies	Little Belts	Highwoods	Crazy	Snowy	Castle	Total
<b>MINERALS 1/</b>								
-Nonenergy	Thousand							
--Category A	Acres	776	3	0	0	0	0	779
--Category B		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
--Category C		0	150	0	20	12	15	197
--Category D		0	645	42	18	107	55	867

1/

Category A - lands withdrawn or proposed for withdrawal from mineral entry.

Category B - lands where laws or executive orders require specific protection or mitigation measures.

Category C - lands where special mitigation measures are required by the Regional Forester.

Category D - lands where standard lease stipulations apply.

### **Forest-wide Management Standards**

Forest-wide management standards clarify policy and direction for forest operations, maintenance and protection. Forest Plan Management Standard G-5 applies to locatable and common variety minerals (Forest Plan page 2-59). The following change to Forest-wide Management Standard G-5 is made as a result of decisions made from the Final Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal EIS.

Under paragraph (2) the following statement shall be added: **All National Forest System lands on the Rocky Mountain Division have been withdrawn from entry under the general mining laws.**

**Management area prescriptions for these lands are to be interpreted consistent with this direction.**

### **Geographic Units**

None of the descriptions of the Geographic Units on the Rocky Mountain Front include any language about locatable hardrock minerals. Geographic Unit RM-10, which is wilderness, is already withdrawn from mineral entry. The description for Geographic Units RM-1 through RM-9 should include: **The lands in this Geographic Unit have been withdrawn from entry under the general mining laws.**

### **NON-SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENT**

The Record Of Decision for the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal makes the decision to amend the Lewis and Clark Forest Plan, discusses the rationale for the decision, and evaluates whether this amendment is significant or non-significant for the purposes of the planning process in accordance with the requirements of 16 USC 1604(f), 36 CFR 219.12(k), FSM 1920 and factors identified in FSH 1909.12 section 5.32 and the direction found in 36 CFR 219.10(f). The ROD determined that the above amendment was non-significant. The ROD and EIS are available by contacting the Lewis and Clark National Forest, P.O. Box 869, Great Falls, MT 59403, (406) 791-7700.

### **CONTACT PERSON**

For additional information, please contact David Whittekiend, ID Team Leader, Lewis and Clark National Forest, P.O. Box 869, Great Falls, MT 59403, (406) 791-7700.

**FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 19**

**HELENA NATIONAL FOREST**

**OCTOBER 2000**



## BACKGROUND

The Helena National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) was approved by the Regional Forester in April 1986. The Forest Plan guides all natural resource management activities and established management standards for the Helena National Forest.

Under the general mining laws, all National Forest System lands in the withdrawal area on the Lincoln Ranger District were available for the staking of mining claims for locatable minerals except those already specifically withdrawn from entry. National Forest System lands can only be withdrawn to mineral entry by a specific act of Congress or through the withdrawal process under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The Record of Decision for the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal selecting Alternative B of the Final Environmental Impact Statement specifically reflects the Chief of the Forest Service's decision to consent to withdrawal of all the acres open to the staking of claims under the general mining laws on the portion of the Lincoln Ranger District included in the proposed withdrawal area. This area would be closed to the staking of mining claims for locatable minerals for the next 20 years. This withdrawal would be subject to review by the Forest Service and by the Department of Interior toward the end of the withdrawal period. The withdrawal may be extended upon compliance with the provisions of FLPMA, and if the purpose for which the withdrawal was first made requires the extension. Any extension shall only be for a period no longer than the length of the original withdrawal period. The Secretary of Interior shall report on such review and extensions to the Congress.

This document reflects the actual language changes made to the Helena Forest Plan by way of amendment by the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral withdrawal decision.

## FOREST PLAN MANAGEMENT DIRECTION (Changes shown in bold)

Forest Plan direction for mineral resources is found in variety of locations in the Forest Plan. Direction for locatable minerals management is provided under Forest-wide management standards and under specific direction for management areas. Appendix Q lists those areas specifically withdrawn or proposed for withdrawal from mineral entry.

### Forest-wide Management Standards

Forest-wide management standards clarify policy and direction for forest operations, maintenance and protection. The following change to the locatable minerals Forest-wide Management Standard (Forest Plan page II-27) is made as a result of decisions made from the Final Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal EIS.

Under paragraph (1) the following statement shall be modified: Consistent with the Mining and Mineral Policy Act of 1970, continue to encourage the responsible development of mineral resources on National Forest lands. Concurrently, require mitigation measures to protect surface resources. **Lands withdrawn from mineral entry are found under Appendix Q. A portion of National Forest System lands on the Lincoln Ranger District has been withdrawn from entry under the general mining laws.** Management area prescriptions for these lands are to be interpreted consistent with this direction.

### Appendix Q

This Forest Plan Amendment would add the acres withdrawn on the Lincoln Ranger District, Helena National Forest to Appendix Q of the Forest Plan. The addition would be as follows:

Serial No.	Name of Site	Township	Range	Acres
	Silver King Lake	T15N	R7W	763
	Continental Divide / Bartlett Creek	T16N	R6W	1,200
	Alice Creek	T16N	R7W	19,395
	Indian Meadows	T16N	R8W	5,099
	Bedrock Creek	T17N	R7W	132

## **NON-SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENT**

The Record Of Decision for the Rocky Mountain Front Mineral Withdrawal makes the decision to amend the Helena Forest Plan, discusses the rationale for the decision, and evaluates whether this amendment is significant or non-significant for the purposes of the planning process in accordance with the requirements of 16 USC 1604(f), 36 CFR 219.12(k), FSM 1920 and factors identified in FSH 1909.12 section 5.32 and the direction found in 36 CFR 219.10(f). The ROD determined that the above amendment was non-significant. The ROD and EIS are available by contacting the Helena National Forest, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59601, (406) 449-5201.

## **CONTACT PERSON**

For additional information, please contact David Whittekiend, ID Team Leader, Lewis and Clark National Forest, P.O. Box 869, Great Falls, MT 59403, (406) 791-7700.

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